

This Week in Congress

November 14, 2005

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

A Veterans Day Message to Our Children

Friday I joined the community of Clifton, town of 543, for a special ceremony honoring our nation's veterans. As fourth graders recited the Pledge of Allegiance and veterans of all ages saluted the flag, everyone present felt a deep sense of appreciation for the sacrifices our nation's service men and women have made.

One year ago this week, Kansas experienced a great loss as two Kansans were killed in the War in Iraq. Sergeant First Class Clinton Wisdom and Sergeant Don Clary were the first Kansas Army National Guard soldiers to die in combat since the Vietnam War. Both were members of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery based in northeast Kansas. On November 8, 2004, these Kansas Guardsmen were providing protection to a convoy in Baghdad when a suicide bomber sped toward them. Without hesitation, these men placed their own vehicle between the bomber and the convoy. Both were killed in the explosion. Their actions saved many lives that day.

Veterans Day is a day to honor the more than 250,000 veterans in Kansas and the 25 million nationwide, as well as their families, who stepped forward to defend our country. It's a day to pay tribute to those who have given so much, to those who continue to give and to those who gave all so that we may live in the greatest country in the world.

To read the full text of my Clifton Veterans Day speech, visit here: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/sp111105VeteransDay.html

Talking Trade with National Farm Broadcasters

More than 2,000 stations were represented at the annual National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) convention I attended this week in Kansas City. At the convention, I participated in a discussion on trade policy and the World Trade Organization with Allen Johnson, former U.S. Trade Representative's Special Ag Negotiator, and **Gregg Young, Director of U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service Multilateral Trade Negotiations Division, moderated by**

Jeff Nalley, Past NAFB President and Farm Director at the Cromwell Ag Radio Network. It was a valuable discussion on the future role the United States will play in trade and the effects on farmers and ranchers.

NAFB has represented farm broadcasters for the last 61 years. Farm broadcasters fulfill a very important role in the lives of farmers and ranchers on a daily basis as they relay current events and market reports. I enjoyed meeting with broadcasters from across the nation and will continue working with them to keep our farmers and ranchers informed.

Meeting our Military Leaders of Tomorrow

The 2005 First District Service Academy Selection Board met this weekend at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene to interview candidates who are applying for admission to U.S. Service Academies. These include the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

The 2005 Selection Board is comprised of community leaders from across Kansas who understand the dedication and discipline required to attend a Service Academy. The members of the board are Jesse Bernal of Garden City, Dr. Mace Braxton of Salina, Krista Bryant of Concordia, Lucille Coverdale of Salina, Trina Delgado of Garden City, John Doswell of Hutchinson, Kathy Gier of Hutchinson, Mike Junk of Salina, Jack Krier of Russell, Cindy Livingston of Pratt, Ron Lucas of Goodland, Dr. David Peterson of Salina, Paula Ripple of Dodge City, Mac Stromberg of Sterling, Dave Warnken of Hutchinson and Ron Whitney of Emporia.

The 16-member board reviewed applications before interviewing candidates and will now give me their recommendations. I appreciate their service and value their input in these important selections. Service Academies train our country's military leaders of tomorrow, and I am honored to be a part of the nomination process.

Speaking to Kansas Farm Bureau Members at the 87th Annual Meeting

This weekend I attended the 87th annual meeting of Kansas Farm Bureau in Manhattan where I spoke to more than 400 Farm Bureau members. The annual meeting, "Beyond the Farm," focused on topics such as trade, energy and the upcoming Farm Bill. I spoke to members about these issues and their importance on the local, national and global levels. The voice of every farmer and rancher needs to be heard and the work of Kansas Farm Bureau is essential to the future of our agriculture industry.

Promoting Bleeding Kansas as a National Heritage Area

On Thursday, Judy Billings, representing the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau, came to Washington, D.C., to testify at a hearing before the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks in support of establishing Bleeding Kansas as a National Heritage Area. Along with other members of the Kansas delegation, I am a sponsor of H.R. 413, legislation that would recognize certain counties in the eastern part of our state as the Bleeding Kansas and Enduring Struggle for Freedom National Heritage Area. This designation would highlight the natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources of our state. I commend Ms. Billings and others for their dedication to promoting Kansas heritage.

Computer Upgrades Cause Loss of E-Mail Messages

On Friday, November 4, my office underwent upgrades to our computer system. A mistake by our computer vendor resulted in a loss of e-mail messages that were sent Thursday, November 3. While I received and read e-mails sent on Thursday, no record of these messages exists, and I am unable to respond. Knowing the thoughts and concerns of Kansans is very important to me. If you sent an e-mail to my office on Thursday, November 3, and would like a response, please e-mail me again and I will be sure to reply. As always, I appreciate hearing from you.

In the Office

This week I stopped in Salina to meet with Gerald Cook, Tim Rogers and Dennis Kuhlman, all of Salina, to talk about K-State Salina. In my Washington, D.C., office this week was John Lapenta with Fairpoint Communications to discuss important rural telecom issues. Fairpoint Communications owns several rural telephone companies in western Kansas, including an operation center in Dodge City.

Tiffany Boxum and Johanna Stowe of Hugoton were in representing the National Even Start Association to discuss family literacy and the importance of serving families with English as their second language. Even Start is a federal and state program focused on lower-income and migrant families. The program has helped many adults learn with their children and set employment goals, and almost every child that leaves the program reads at or above grade level.

Concordia High School students Zach Widen, Laura Hansen, Jenny Deneault, Alicia McKenna, Ben Swenson, Ryan LaBarge, Brandon Gumm, Bryant Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Leah Lowell, Stuart Warkentin, Alexandria Puderbaugh and Kyle Stacken were in Washington this week participating in the Close Up Program. Judy Hill accompanied the group of students. We talked about my role as a Member of Congress and what the students were learning while in our nation's capital.

Larry Biro, Director of the Veterans' Affairs Rocky Mountain Network in Denver, Colorado, was in to discuss my concerns with the long distances veterans living in northwest Kansas must travel to access health care and the strong need in the area for a community-based outpatient clinic. Jim French of Partridge was in to talk about farm and conservation programs, as well as budget reconciliation. Senator Lana Oleen of Manhattan and Rey Kitchkumme of Mayetta were in to discuss gaming issues. Rebecca Vitztum of Hays was in my office this week with the Congressional Youth Leadership Council.

Bradley Shafer with the University of Kansas School of Law Endowment Association was in to talk about improvements at the law school and the importance of alumni involvement and support. I currently serve as an alumni representative on the KU Law School Dean Search Committee, and I have enjoyed this opportunity to help support Kansas students, faculty and higher education.

Jon Josserand of Lawrence stopped by the office to say hello, as did Bill Colby of Prairie Village. Loretta Hoerman of Topeka was in representing the American Academy of Physician Assistants to discuss Medicare qualifications, grants and workman's compensation issues.

In my office this week for a tour of the Capitol building were Karen Shade of Hays, Mario and Diana Mata of Salina and Joyce Gans of Bennington.

Very truly yours,

Jerry